

A Message from the Commissioner

This is the first Annual Crime Report of the Twenty-First Century and the fifth published during my tenure as the Commissioner of the Cambridge Police Department. This report, which details crime by category and by neighborhood, continues this Department's effort of graphically detailing the landscape of crime in our City so that fear can be dispelled and intelligent problem solving strategies can be developed. We will continue to focus on our responsibility to reduce crime and disorder in a way that takes into account the unique needs of the individuals, communities and interests that constitute Cambridge.

For the second time since 1993, Cambridge recorded a yearly increase in serious crime in 2000. The Crime Index rose by 46 incidents, a one percent increase when compared with the 1999 figures. This slight incline in the crime rate should be tempered by the fact that the 1999 Index was the lowest recorded in our City in 35 years and the 2000 count of 4389 reports, represents the second fewest incidents recorded since 1965.

Serious crime in Cambridge has plummeted 53% since 1975 and 37% when compared with the 1990 statistics. The ebb and flow of crime is an ongoing, cyclical process. The decade long downturn in Cambridge has been mirroring the national trend of reduced crime rates. The debate between academicians and criminal justice professionals over why crime has declined so dramatically continues to rage. A strong economy, a low unemployment rate, a declining population of juvenile offenders, longer prison sentences, more police officers, increased crime prevention efforts, the demise of the professional thief, and community policing are all key factors in driving down the crime rate.

As we embark on the new millennium, we will not be complacent. With crime at this historic nadir, it is more important than ever to concentrate on the quality of life issues that will affect the City into the twenty-first century. We anticipate that the following issues will be at the forefront of our problem solving initiatives: continued community concern about women's safety and domestic violence; increased traffic and parking related problems, truck restrictions, pedestrian and bicycle safety enforcement; additional narcotic enforcement efforts; and problems with the homeless.

As always, the Department plans to continue and enhance our commitment to making crime information available to the citizens of Cambridge. Our web site (<http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~CPD>) provides timely information on current crime problems and other relevant information, while our scheduled community meetings give Cambridge residents a forum to discuss their crime and safety concerns.

The *2000 Annual Crime Report* is one of many resources the Cambridge Police Department provides to the citizens of Cambridge. In these pages, you will find detailed, relevant information—not just statistics—on crime issues affecting the city. We believe that we are in the top percentile of police departments in the nation in the quantity and quality of information that we provide to the public on a regular basis, and our *Crime Reports* have consequently won awards and accolades from international organizations. Behind this report is a firm policy of ensuring that the Cambridge community is a well-informed partner of the Cambridge Police Department and its efforts.

Ronnie Watson
Police Commissioner